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Dr. Rafael Palacios
Coordinator
Undergraduate Program on Genomic Sciences.
National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Dear Dr. Palacios:

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It is my pleasure to express my opinion on the **Undergraduate Program in Genomic Sciences** at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Cuernavaca.

I had a chance to evaluate this program during my one-week lecture visit at the Center for Genomic Sciences (CCG) two years ago, and I remain connected to the center through the publications from this center which play a key role in my work in functional genomics

During my visit I was most impressed by the extraordinarily high level of knowledge and skills of the students who as a group exhibited a homogenous, solid command of the mathematical tools so much needed but sorely missed in genomics. I really envied the Center for having such a large body of excellent students: as an investigator at Harvard Medical School, I wish I had students with the comprehensive and specific skill set I have seen at the CCG to chose from. The training that these students receive will certainly produce the type of interdisciplinary and versatile scientists of the next "postgenomic" generation who are already highly thought after. In addition to the extraordinary intellectual capabilities that I encountered in the students, their sparkling enthusiasm for their studies was truly refreshing.

The program is carefully designed, well balanced between conveying computational skills and biological knowledge. It also strikes a good balance between multi-disciplinarity and integration. The inclusion of Systems Biology in the higher semester gives proof to the timeliness of the material taught. I am sure that as this field develops, this nascent discipline will receive more weight in the curriculum. The incorporation of Ethics and Legal issues is particularly laudable and should serve as an example for similar programs in the U.S.!

As a member of the Harvard community, and now of the University of Calgary, who over the past decade has actively helped promote new interdisciplinary initiatives such as Systems Biology and Biocomplexity, I can only attest to the strength and visionary courage of this Undergraduate Program in Genomics. It is unique in its multi-disciplinary, comprehensiveness and integrative efforts, and it fills a growing gap in education that elsewhere is still wide open.

If there is something I missed - which pales in view of all the impressive features of this program, it would be a stronger link to medical research. Given its historical roots in agriculturally relevant research and the connection to biotechnology, future expansion may emphasize the outreach to biomedicine and medical epidemiology which offer an immense opportunity for the application of the genomics skills that the student acquire in this program.

In summary, I find the program and the students of outstanding quality by international standards and I am pleased to have had the chance to be inspired by this program

Sincerely yours,

Sui Huang, MD, PhD